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STUDIES IN THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

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I

DAVID'S THREE POEMS

THE prose history of David's reign, as it lies before us in the Second Book of Samuel, contains three poems ascribed to David, and inserted in different, and, on the whole, appropriate, places of the history: (1) an Elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan, given by the historian at the conclusion of his narrative of the arrival to David of the news of the death of the heroes (2 Sam. 1. 19-27); (2) a Hymn on his triumph over his enemies, placed after the last narrative of his wars (ch. 22); and (3) an Oracle on the perpetuity and prosperity of his dynasty (23. 1-7), which follows immediately upon the Hymn of Triumph, apparently because it forms an appropriate sequel to the last verse of the Hymn:

מלכו	מגדיל ישועות
למשיחו	ועשה חסד
עד עולם.	לדור ולדור

There is also another brief elegy on the death of Abner (3. 33-4), which we leave out of consideration for the present.

These three poems present many great difficulties, both textual and exegetical. Much has, indeed, been done by the well-known modern commentaries to elucidate and

remove these difficulties, but a great deal more still remains to be done before we can lay claim to a full understanding of these poems. In particular, the commentaries have failed to give a satisfactory explanation of the structure and form of the poems. The latest efforts in this direction, those of W. Rothstein, 'Die Klagelieder Davids', and of O. Proksch, 'Die letzten Worte Davids' (both published in *Alttestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Kittel*, Leipzig, 1913), can hardly be described as a success. Rothstein is actually compelled to delete a full third of the Elegy as spurious, in order to carry out his artificial reconstruction of the poem in accordance with the *kinah* metre. The result, as might be expected, is a very sad mutilation of that beautiful elegy. In the following inquiry a new attempt will be made, without resorting to extravagancies, to recover the original form of the poems, and also, at the same time, to elucidate some of the difficulties in the text.

I. THE ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN

This beautiful lyric, the genuineness of which is conceded by all critics, lacks, as it now stands in our text, all unity of form and of plan. Yet our poet displays in individual stanzas a wonderful mastery of technique. Note, for example, the following:

אל תגידו	בגת
אל תבשרו	בחוץ אשקלון
פן תשמחנה	בנות פלשתים
פן תעלונה	בנות הערלים.

It is incredible that a poet who could produce such a beautifully-balanced stanza, would fail to apply his artistic powers to the production of balance and harmony between

the various parts of his composition. And, in fact, if we examine the poem a little more closely, we shall find that its structure was originally based upon a certain definite plan, which has only become obscured through the unfortunate corruptions of the text, and the disarrangement of its parts. The opening lines :

על במותיך חלל

איך נפלו גברים,

are repeated in a different order in ver. 25, and also partly in the last verse (ver. 27). This fact justifies us in the assumption that the lines formed originally a *refrain*, which had to be repeated by a chorus after a certain break in the poem. Again, since in vv. 25, 27 the distich begins with

איך נפלו גברים,

it is plausible to argue that this line formed the beginning of the refrain. Such a beginning would be parallel to the opening of Lam. 1. 1; 2. 1; 4. 1; to the opening of the *mashal* on the King of Babylon, Isa. 14. 4, and to the lament of Jer. 9. 18. The present arrangement of the lines in ver. 19 may be explained as being due to a mistaken popular exegesis, which regarded העצבי as the subject of חלל. Further, whilst the first line of the refrain is invariable (= איך נפלו גברים), the second line varies: in the opening of the elegy it runs: על במותיך חלל; in the conclusion it runs: ויאבדו כלי מלחמה, but in the middle of the elegy we have the following lines side by side: על במותיך חלל || בתוך המלחמה. I venture to throw out the rather bold conjecture that ויאבדו כלי מלחמה בתוך המלחמה is a corruption of an original ויאבדו כלי מלחמה. That warriors should fall in the midst of the battle is certainly a cause for lamentation, but, on the other hand, it is a fate that must inevitably befall many of them. The

thought, therefore, is rather commonplace. Not so, however, the thought that with the fall of the warriors have also perished the instruments of war. The distich

איך נפלו גבורים
בתוך המלחמה,

sounds inexpressibly weak beside

איך נפלו גבורים
ויאברו כלי מלחמה.

Seeing, therefore, that the line על במותיך חלל is found in the poem twice, we expect that its parallel line, ויאברו כלי מלחמה, should also be repeated again. And the only place where it can be found a second time is in ver. 25, and in the stead of the prosaic line בתוך המלחמה. Ver. 25 will thus be made up of two refrains, transposed from their right places, abridged, and jumbled together. Originally the contents of the verse ran as follows :

איך נפלו גבורים
ויאברו כלי מלחמה ;

and

איך נפלו גבורים
על במותיך חלל.

יהונתן has thus no room in the verse, and must be deleted, as a dittography from the following ver. 26.

The poem will thus have four refrains: one at the opening, one at the conclusion, and two in the middle. Each of these latter two must have stood at the end of a certain division in the poem. It follows that the poem must have originally been divided into three parts, and we may assume that these parts were of equal length. As the poem consists of nine verses, and as three of these are made up of refrains (vv. 19, 25, 27), we have six verses for the

three parts, viz. two verses for each part. And, in fact, if we scrutinize the contents of these three couples of verses, viz. 20-1, 22-3, 24-6, we shall find that the thoughts expressed in the verses of each couple are closely related to one another, and that the first couple leads up to the second, and the second to the third, thus forming a gradation of ideas, leading up to a climax in ver. 26, which is an outburst of personal grief over the loss of a friend, whose love transcended all the highest love known to human experience. In the first couple of verses the poet dwells on the catastrophe, in the second couple on the bravery of the dead heroes, and in the third and last couple, on their nobility of character, and their generosity to their friends.

The elegy opens with the refrain, ver. 19, which sums up forcibly and succinctly the tragedy enacted on the heights of Gilboa. This leads the poet directly to think of the malicious joy of the heathen enemy at Israel's calamity (ver. 20). Then his mind reverts to the tragedy, and he breaks forth with a curse on Mount Gilboa, on the heights of which the shield of the heroes had been flung away as something useless and unclean (ver. 21). Upon this followed the refrain in a modified form:

איך נפלו גבורים
ויאברו כלי מלחמה.

The thought of the heroes in the second part of ver. 21, and their comparison in the refrain to the armour of Israel, leads the poet in the second pair of verses to a contemplation of their martial skill and their prowess in the battle-field, and of their affection and loyalty (vv. 22-3). The sequence of ideas would be greatly improved if we would change the order of these verses: first ver. 23, in which

the poet thinks of the heroes jointly and inseparably, and dwells upon the loveliness of their character, their mutual devotion, and their noble valour; and then ver. 22, in which the poet depicts the skill and the success in battle of each of the heroes separately. This part is also concluded by the refrain, namely in its first form:

אֵיךְ נָפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים
עַל בְּמוֹתֵיךְ חָלָל.

The mention at the end of the refrain of the heights of Israel, leads the poet in the third and last pair of verses to think of the heroes in their relation to their own people, and first he speaks of Saul and his generosity to the daughters of Israel (ver. 24), and then he bursts forth in a cry of grief over the death of his beloved Jonathan, and the loss of that wonderful love which had bound them together. And finally, the elegy is concluded by the repetition of the second refrain (ver. 27).

The poem thus consists, besides the four refrains, of three strophes, each of which contains two verses. In the first strophe the verses are tetrastichs, in which line *a* is synonymous to line *b*, and line *c* to line *d*, and *c-d* being synthetic to *a-b*. In the last two strophes the verses are tristichs, and the parallelism varies. Thus, in the first verse of the second strophe (ver. 23), the parallelism is synthetic. In the second verse of the second strophe (ver. 22), *b* and *c* are synonymous to each other, and synthetic to *a*. On the other hand, in the third strophe, the parallelism is the so-called *climactic* parallelism (or 'the ascending rhythm'). The unsuitable עֲרִיִּים in ver. 24 *b* should be read, with LXX, עֲרִי זֶהב, and this noun is taken up again in line *c*—זֶהב. Further, I conjecture that the strange form נִפְלְאָתָה in ver. 26

consists really of a fusion of two words: נפֿלאַה and נפֿלאַה־אָ. The lines will therefore run as follows :

נעמַת לִי מֵאֵר נפֿלאַה
נפֿלאַה אַהבַת־לִי מֵאֵרַת נשִׁים.

As for the character of the lines, it may be stated that they contain mostly four stresses, or accents, with a *caesura* in the middle of the line. The only exception in the poem itself is the first line of the verses in the first strophe: אֶל תִּנְיֹר בַּגַּת, which is trimetric only. The refrains are also made up of trimetric lines without any noticeable *caesura*. There is further the opening phrase, הַצִּבִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל, which forms a perfect puzzle. If I could bring myself to acquiesce in the present order of the lines in ver. 19, I would propose to read: הַצִּבִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל, and to translate: 'The host, O Israel, lieth slain on thy heights! How are the mighty fallen!' But this hypothesis is rendered untenable in view of the results reached above. I can only conclude that these words contain an instruction to the people to join as a chorus in the singing of the refrain, but I am unable to suggest any suitable emendation. Perhaps הַצִּבִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל = 'Reply, O Israel!' As for the introduction in ver. 18, I conjecture that לִלְמַד בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה קֶשֶׁת is a later musical superscription to the elegy, on the analogy of similar superscriptions in the Psalms: cf. in particular Ps. 60. 1. The meaning would be that the elegy was sung to the tune of a song which began with the words לִלְמַד בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה קֶשֶׁת.

I will now set out the whole text of the poem arranged in accordance with the results of our investigation :

הַצִּבִּי (?) יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֵיךְ נפֿלוּ גִבּוֹרִים
עַל בְּמוֹתֵיךְ חָלָל.

I

- | | | |
|---------------|----|------------------------|
| אל תנידו | 1. | אל תנידו |
| אל תבשרו | | בגת |
| פן תשמחנה | | בחוצת אשקלון |
| פן תעלזנה | | בנות פלשתים |
| | | בנות הערלים. |
| הרי בגלבע | 2. | אל-טל |
| ואל-מטר עליכם | | שדות המות ¹ |
| כירשם ננעל | | מגן גבורים |
| מגן שאול | | בלי-משיח בשמן. |
- איך נפלו גברים
ויאברו כלי מלחמה.

II

- | | | |
|---------------|----|------------------|
| שואל ויהונתן | 1. | הנאהבים והנעימים |
| בחייהם ובמותם | | לא נפרדו |
| מנשרים קלו | | מאריות גברו. |
| מדם חללים | 2. | מחלב גברים |
| קשת יהונתן | | לא-נשוג אחור |
| וחרב שאול | | לא-תשוב ריקם. |
- איך נפלו גברים
על במותיך חלל.

III

- | | | |
|----------------|----|---------------|
| בנות ישראל | 1. | אל-שאול בכינה |
| המלבשכם שני | | עם עדיים |
| המעלה ערי זהב | | על לבושכן. |
| צר-לי עליך | 2. | אחי יהונתן |
| נעמת לי | | מאד נפלאה |
| נפלאה אהבתך-לי | | מאהבת נשים. |
- איך נפלו גבורים
ויאברו כלי מלחמה.

¹ With H. P. Smith and Budde after LXX, Lucian. This forms an excellent parallel to הרי בגלבע.

2. THE HYMN OF TRIUMPH

Most critics deny the genuineness of this magnificent hymn. They point to passages like vv. 23, 28, 50, which sound impossible in the mouth of David. But these obviously late passages may be glosses inserted by later scribes. It must be borne in mind that the poem was used for liturgical purposes at a rather early date, as is proved by its inclusion in the first Book of the Psalms, where it is headed לְמִנְצָה. It is therefore probable that additions were from time to time inserted into the poem by these מְנַצְּחִים, or others, in order to bring it into greater conformity with the needs of their age. The problem is stated with admirable precision by the late Professor Briggs in his commentary on the Psalms (vol. I, p. 140 f.), to which the reader may be referred. The present writer feels positive that the late passages in the poem, to be enumerated below, are late insertions, and somewhat out of accord with the spirit of the original parts of the poem. By removing these insertions, we obtain a composition which bears the marks of a strongly individualistic character, a fact which militates against the theory advanced by many writers that the poet speaks for the community. The poet, who only speaks of his own personal experience, must have been in some great danger from which he had been saved miraculously by, what he considered, the direct personal intervention of God (vv. 5-20). Further, he was a warrior who had fought hard battles against foreign foes, and who had also met with opposition, or persecution, at the hand of enemies among his own people (cf. vv. 44 *a*, 49 *b, c*). By vanquishing both of these classes of adversaries, he secured for himself a wide and undisputed dominion over his own and other nations

(vv. 33-46). These details suit David better than any other personality known to us in the history of Israel. It is true that we have no record in our Books of Samuel of an event similar to the one described in vv. 8-17. But we must remember that our records of David's military history are extremely scanty and fragmentary. And it is plausible to assume, that he may have been indebted for one of his many military triumphs to a sudden thunderstorm, accompanied by torrential and tempestuous gusts of rain, which are depicted in our poem as a magnificent and awe-inspiring theophany. Perhaps his victory over the Philistines described in 2 Sam. 5. 19-21 was gained under similar circumstances, and we should read there ver. 20: *נִפְרַץ לִפְנֵי* for *נִפְרַץ*: 'The Lord hath broken down mine enemies before me *by means of* a breaking forth of waters.' Or, again, the whole picture may be a work of pure imagination to describe a miraculous deliverance from some overwhelming danger, and as such, too, it may suit David as well as any other historical person known to us. At all events, there is nothing in the poem, when reduced to its original form, to refute the theory of the Davidic authorship, and there is a good deal in the poem to support it. Seeing, further, that this theory, so plausible in itself, is also attested to by the superscription to the poem found in the two different recensions preserved to us in 2 Sam. and Psalms respectively, recensions which seem to have been derived from two different sources, we are fully justified in concluding that the author of the poem in its original form was no other but the Royal Singer of Israel himself.

We will now proceed to discuss the insertions and glosses in the poem.

The first line (ver. 2) has been recognized by all critics

as too long for the metre of the poem. And it has been proposed to omit the Divine name יהוה, thereby obtaining a trimetric line (so Briggs and others). But the retention of the name is absolutely necessary, since it forms the invocation at the head of the poem, and is parallel to אלהי in the next line, which latter should, of course, be pointed אלהי, with most of the Versions and Psalms (=אלי). It is, therefore, better to omit לי ומפלטי, a phrase which is also difficult grammatically. If so, the gloss will be very old, since it has been copied from here into Ps. 144. 2. In ver. 3 we must omit as a gloss the last four words ומונסי וגו', which are not found in Psalms. We must then read וְמִשְׁנֵבִי. The *waw* may have been omitted accidentally through haplography, owing to the preceding *yod*, or omitted deliberately by the glossator, in order to produce a better balance with the added ומונסי וגו'. By these changes we obtain an exordium to the poem, consisting of two trimetric verses, the first being a tristich, like the concluding verse of the poem (ver. 51), and forming a kind of invocation to the subject of the Hymn; and the second verse being a distich, like the great majority of the verses of the poem, and summing up succinctly the contents of the Hymn, viz. that by calling upon the Lord the poet secured salvation from his enemies:

וּמִצַּדְתִּי	יְהוָה סִלְעִי
אֶחָסֶה־בּוֹ	אֱלֹהֵי צוּרִי
וּמִשְׁנֵבִי.	מִנִּי וּקְרִי־יֵשְׁעִי
אֶקְרָא יְהוָה	מִחֻלָּל
אוֹשֵׁעַ.	וּמִן אִיבִי

The next important insertion is found at the end of the first part of the poem, and consists of a series of three

glosses (vv. 21–8). The first of these glosses is made up of five trimetric distichs, vv. 21–5. The glossator puts into the poet's mouth the statement, that his deliverance was the due reward of his piety and righteousness. The object of the insertion is clear, viz. to confirm by David's example the community's belief in the doctrine of Divine retribution. It is hardly necessary to state that David would not have described himself, even in his poetic exaltation, as perfectly righteous and without blemish. He could not, for example, have entirely forgotten his sin with Bath Sheba. Contrast also the complacent self-righteousness in these verses, with David's more becoming humility in 2 Sam. 7. 18. On the other hand, the description of David's moral and religious perfection is quite in accord with the later idealized conception of the heroic king: cf. 1 Kings 11. 33; 15. 5, &c. This gloss was then followed by another gloss, in which the lesson to be derived from the first gloss was expressed in the fashion of the gnomic poetry (vv. 26–7). This second gloss consists of a trimetric tetrastich, in which the first three lines are synonymous with one another, and antithetical to the fourth line. The gloss teaches the doctrine of מדה כנגד מדה—Measure for measure. The person addressed in the verbs may be God; more probably it is the disciple of the sage. Our text has suffered in transmission: נביר in ver. 26 must be omitted, with Briggs, as a dittography of נבר in ver. 27, whilst the verbs in this latter verse must be corrected after the text in Psalms:

תתחסר	עם חסיר
תתמם.	עם תמים
תתברר	עם נבר
תתפתל.	ועם עקש

The second gloss was further followed by a third gloss, consisting of a trimetric distich (ver. 28), in which the glossator expressed the hope that God Himself would act in accordance with the rule taught in the preceding glosses, and save suffering Israel, and humble the proud evil-doers. The text of the second line is difficult. No doubt, as has been recognized by Briggs, it is more original than the smooth substitute in Psalms, but it is doubtful whether this is what the original glossator wrote. Briggs thinks that the original did not have the verb. But the expression על עין is elsewhere used only in a favourable sense, Gen. 44. 21; Ps. 32. 8. As the text stands, it must be interpreted with Kīmhī and Gersonides, 'Thine eyes are upon the lofty that thou mayest humble them'.

vv. 31-2 are also glosses, but independent ones. They break the connexion between vv. 30 and 33, as will be made clearer later on, and they breathe a spirit entirely different from that of the verses immediately preceding and following them. Ver. 31a seems to have been suggested to some reader by תמים דרכו . . . האל (Ketib) in ver. 33. The line seems to have been modelled on Deut. 32. 4 (האל תמים פעלו), and is certainly not original. Perhaps it is only a dittography of the words in ver. 33. The following two lines are also found with slight variations in Prov. 30. 5, where the apothegm seems to have been preserved in a more original form. These lines seem to have been suggested by מן in ver. 36. Ver. 32 is a gloss on vv. 47-8a. Note and compare the Divine Names אל, יהוה, צור, אלהינו in this verse with יהוה, צורי, אלהי, האל in vv. 47-48. The contents of the gloss are borrowed and adapted from a number of familiar passages in the Bible. Another gloss we have in ver. 36, as Briggs has rightly observed. The second line is ex-

tremely doubtful, and shows an Aramaizing tendency. In Psalms it has been further expanded by the addition of another gloss. It also breaks the connexion between ver. 35b and ver. 37, which describe the progress of the actual fighting by the poet, whereas ver. 36 is concerned only with the preparation for the battle, which has already been described in the preceding strophe (vv. 29-30, 33-4; cf. below). The last important gloss is to be found in ver. 50. Its lines are balanced unevenly, and its contents, while quite unsuitable in the mouth of David, belong to the stock of the familiar ideas and expressions of the later liturgical literature.

The critics consider also vv. 45 a-6 either as a gloss or as evidence of the late date of the poem. They state that **בני נכר** is a late expression, and could not have been used by David. But there is no conclusive evidence to justify such a statement. Again, that the passage is conceived 'in the hostile spirit to foreign nations of later times' (Briggs). From this one might conclude that in early times Jews, unlike other nations, did not hate their enemies. We understand the motives which actuate Christian theologians in their glorification of the earlier Jews at the expense of their later descendants. But critics who claim to be scientific should not indulge in the *odium theologicum*. There are no real grounds for assigning a late date to the passage. Ver. 45 a is parallel to Deut. 33. 29, certainly an old passage. In ver. 46 b we should restore **וירגו**, as in Micah 7. 17, which is derived from our passage. **ויהרגו=ויהרגו**, as in Psalms, was substituted by a scribe, who thought the Aramaic word more elegant, a procedure which has been responsible for the occurrence of many Aramaisms in our ancient texts. Finally, the last verse of the poem, ver. 51, is also considered

by most critics as being of late date. But it is not clear why David should not have described himself as God's King and God's Anointed, a title which he repeatedly applied to Saul. The impersonal note in the verse is, indeed, not found elsewhere in the poem, but it should occasion no surprise. It is intended to give the poem a more solemn and elevated ending, and at the same time to indicate its authorship. Note the climactic gradation
 דוד || משיחו || מלכו.

Having cleared the poem of its later accretions, we are now in a position to determine its structure, and to study its contents.

The original Hymn is divided into three parts: (1) an exordium (vv. 2-4); (2) the poet's deliverance from a deadly peril through the personal intervention of God (vv. 5-20); (3) his victory over the enemy in battle, the submission of all his adversaries, and his attainment to dominion for himself and his seed (vv. 29-30, 33-5, 37-46, 48-9, 51). The connexion between the latter two parts is rather loose, but it would be hypercritical to suspect a duality of authorship. Perhaps, however, these two parts formed originally two distinct compositions.

The prevailing metre is the distich with three stresses to the line, and with a *caesura* after the first or second stress. But there are some variations to this rule. The opening verse (vv. 2-3 b) and the concluding verse (ver. 51) are both tristichs. A tristich is also found twice in the middle of the poem, in a passage of sweeping passion and eloquence, which depicts the terrible manifestations of the Divine wrath (vv. 8-9). Again, instead of the trimetric line, we also find lines with two stresses only, viz. vv. 7 d, 13 a, 16 a. It is to be noted that these dimetric lines are

found, as will be shown below, only in the last distich of the strophe. A dimetric line appears further in ver. 46 b, also the last distich of a strophe; but the long word *מַמְסַנְרוֹתָם*, which should, perhaps, be changed, with Psalms and Micah 7. 17, into the fuller form *מַמְסַנְרוֹתֵיהֶם* (ממסנרוֹתֵיהֶם). The same applies to ver. 41 b (*וְאַצְמִיחֶם*), and to ver. 24 b in the gloss (*וְאַשְׁתַּמְרֶה*). On the other hand, in ver. 15 b we must read with some texts of the LXX: *וַיְבָרֶךְ בָּרֶק וַיְהִי מָם*; cf. Ps. 144. 6, which is an adaptation from our passage. In ver. 4 b (the end of a strophe!) we should, perhaps, read, as in Psalms, *וּמֵן אֵיבִי*. So also in ver. 49: *וּמֵן קָמִי, מֵן אֵיבִי*; cf. Psalms. In a number of lines our text shows more than three stresses (e.g. ver. 12, 35 b, 43 b), but these rest on textual corruption, as will be shown below.

(1) The exordium consists, as has already been observed, of one strophe of two verses; a tristich of synonymous lines, forming a kind of invocation, and a description of the subject of the Hymn (vv. 2-3 b), and a distich of synthetic lines, summarizing the contents of the Hymn (ver. 4). The other two parts of the poem are of practically equal length, each part consisting of five strophes, and each strophe being made up of four distichs, or eight lines. An exception to this rule is found in the second strophe of part two (vv. 8-9), which consists of two tristichs, or six lines.

(2) Part two describes the poet's deliverance from his peril through a theophany. Strophe 1 (vv. 5-7). The poet is encompassed by deadly perils, and he cries to God, who hears his voice. The strophe consists of four distichs, the lines of which are synonymous. There is also a synonymity between the first and the second distich, and between the third and the fourth, while the second pair of distichs is

synthetic to the first pair. The introductory **כִּי** in ver. 5 should, with Psalms, be omitted as a scribal addition. For **אֶקְרָא**, in ver. 7 b, we should read **אֲשַׁע**, as in Psalms and some Versions. Strophe 2 (vv. 8–9). God's mighty wrath is kindled against the poet's enemies, and it manifests itself in the terrible agitation of the heavens and the earth, and in the smoke and fire and burning coals, which issue forth from the Divine breathing. The strophe consists of two tristichs, in which the first two lines are synonymous, and the third line is repetitionary. Strophe 3 (vv. 10–13), God appears in person to deliver the poet. The strophe consists of four distichs. In the first two (vv. 10–11) the lines are synonymous; in the third distich (ver. 12, see below) they are climactic, and in the fourth (ver. 13) synthetic. For **וִירָא** in ver. 11 b we should, of course, read **וִירָא**, as in Psalms and many manuscripts. In ver. 12 I propose to delete **כִּכּוֹת** as a dittography of the similar letters in the previous word; also to delete **כִּים** which is altogether out of place here, and to correct, after Psalms and LXX, **חֲשֶׁכֶת** for **חֲשֶׁרֶת**. The distich will then run as follows:

סְבִיבְתִּיו	וִישַׁת חֶשֶׁךְ
עֲבִי שְׁחִקִים.	חֲשֶׁכֶת

The parallelism will thus be climactic, or of the ascending rhythm. In ver. 13 our text is certainly correct and original. The meaning is that in spite of the thick darkness with which God surrounded Himself in the last verse, yet the Divine brightness that is always before Him (**נִגְוֹ**) shone and glowed like burning coals of fire. The text in Psalms manifestly arose through a corruption of our text. **בְּעֵרִי** was changed by the transposition of the first two letters into **עֲבֵרִי**, and this erroneous form was dittographed twice

into עביו and ברר. Strophe 4 (vv. 14-16). God hurls His weapons of thunder and lightning, and scatters the poet's enemies amidst the tempest and the flood. The strophe consists of four distichs of synonymous lines. In ver. 14 we should read וירעם, as in Psalms, since the verb describes a single act, corresponding to the preceding and following verbs. So also in ver. 16 ב, ויגלו, as in Psalms. In ver. 15 ב we must read ויברק ברק; cf. our remark above. Finally, strophe 5 (vv. 17-20) describes the poet's deliverance following on the overthrow of his enemies, and consists, like the previous strophes, of four distichs of synonymous lines. מאיבי עו in ver. 18 a is grammatically difficult. It is better to insert כי before עו, parallel to כי אמצו, in the second line. In ver. 19 we should point יקרמני, the subject being the Lord: cf. Ps. 21. 4; 59. 11, &c. This will greatly improve the parallelism. The object אחי in ver. 20 is placed at the end of the line for the sake of emphasis. In Psalms we get the contracted form ויציאני, through the influence of יקרמני, יחלעני, &c.

(3) The third part begins with ver. 29, after the first series of glosses discussed above. It describes the poet's military victories, and his rise to dominion over his enemies from within and without. It consists, like the second part, of five strophes of four distichs each, with the exception of the concluding verse, which is a tristich. Strophe 1 consists of vv. 29-30, 33-4, the intervening verses, as already stated, being late glosses. The strophe describes the poet's preparation and equipment for the battle against his enemies. God illumines the darkness of his path (ver. 29); He gave him strength to run at the troop of the enemy, leaping the walls that blocked his way (v. 30); He girded him with strength, and rendered his way even and free

from obstacles (ver. 33), and, finally, made him as fleet as a hind, and stationed him in the battle-field on elevated ground, and in a commanding position (ver. 34). The parallelism in the first two distichs is synonymous, and in the last two synthetic. In ver. 29 our text is original. The text in Psalms is evidently a free paraphrase for the rather materialistic description of God as a lamp. ויהיה in b should be ואלהי, as in many manuscripts, cf. Psalms. Ver. 33 must be restored with Psalms:

המאזרני חיל	האל
תמים דרכי.	ויתן

In ver. 34 b it would be better to read with LXX במות, namely, of the battle-field; but במותי may also be defended. Strophe 2 (vv. 35, 37-9) describes the battle. With the skill which God had taught his hands, the poet bends his bow to shoot at the enemy from a distance (ver. 35); at the approach of the enemy to fight at close quarters, God broadens the space between the poet's feet that he may stand firm at the onset of the enemy (ver. 37); the enemy retire discomfited, and the poet pursues them with destruction (ver. 38); he smites them, that they fall under his feet (ver. 39). The parallelism is synthetic. In ver. 35 b, I read: ונחתה קשת ירעתי נחושה. ונחתה is either a dittography of נחתה, or a gloss from Job 20. 24; cf. also Nowack, *ad loc.* נחתה is piel of נחת = ירד, as in Aramaic, and is applied to pressing down one part of the bow by the hands, whilst the other part is stretched by the feet (Ps. 7. 13. This disposes of Briggs's objection). So Rashi and others; cf. Thenius-Löhr, *ad loc.* ואשמדם in ver. 38 a is premature. We should better read with Psalms ואשיגם; cf. Exod. 15. 9, ארדף אשיג. In ver. 39 a we must omit ואכלם, with Psalms. It is a gloss

suggested by בלֹותם. We should also read, as in Psalms, יפֹלו, אִמְרוּצִם, the verbs being progressive imperfects, describing the gradual progress of the battle. Strophe 3 (vv. 40-3) gives a second description of the battle, with additional details. In the first two distichs the lines are synthetic, and in the last two distichs they are synonymous. וְתֹורִי in ver. 40 should, of course, be corrected, as in Psalms, into וְתֹאזְרִי; so תַּחֲה, ver. 41, into נִתְּתָה. Our text in ver. 41 b is certainly much more effective than Psalms. מִשְׁנֵאִי is, of course, a case of *casus pendens*, and וְאַצְמִיתֶם should be pointed וְאַצְמִיתֶם. For יִשְׁעוּ in ver. 42 we must read יִשְׁעוּ, as in Psalms. In ver. 43 we must point וְאַשְׁחֶקֶם, and delete אֶרְקֶם, which is a correction of an erroneous *varia lectio* אֶרְקֶם, as in Psalms. Strophe 4 consists of vv. 44-6, *plus* 49 c which must be inserted after ver. 44 a (so also Nowack). The strophe describes the poet's triumph over his internal enemies (vv. 44 a, 49 c), and his dominion over foreign nations (vv. 44 b-6). The parallelism may be described both as synonymous or synthetic. In ver. 44 a we must, with Psalms, omit the *waw* consecutive, corresponding to the other imperfects in the strophe. עִמִּי is certainly correct, the reading in Psalms having arisen from the old defective spelling. The allusion must be to the revolt of Absalom, Shim'i, and Sheba'. אִישׁ חֲמִסִּים may refer to any of his numerous Israelitish foes; cf. Ps. 55. 10. Perhaps Ibn Ezra (Ps. *ad loc.*) is right in seeing in it a reference to Saul; cf. 1 Sam. 24. 14. תִּשְׁמְרִי in ver. 44 b should, of course, be corrected, with Psalms, into תִּשְׁמִי. In ver. 45 the order of the lines in our text is certainly to be preferred to that in Psalms. For לִשְׁמוֹעַ, however, it is better to read, as in Psalms, לִשְׁמֹעַ. In ver. 46 יִבְלוּ should be retained, and in ב we should read, as already observed above, מִמִּסְגְּרוֹתֵיהֶם.

It may be noted that the poet devotes three distichs to a description of his absolute dominion over his foreign subjects, because of its great political and religious significance, and its novelty in the history of Israel. The last and concluding strophe (vv. 47–9 b, 51) contains a doxology to the God who had vanquished the poet's foes, and had magnified His salvation and mercies to His Anointed King David and his dynasty; cf. 2 Sam. 7. 16, 29. The strophe consists of three synonymous distichs, and a tristich of which the first two lines are synonymous, and the third and concluding line, climactic. A tristich describing the relation of God to the Royal poet, forms thus the conclusion of the Hymn, just as a similar tristich formed its beginning. In ver. 47 b **צור** must be omitted with Psalms. In ver. 48 b **ומריד** is original; cf. Briggs. In ver. 49 we should read, as stated above, **ומן קמי ומוציאי** forms a better parallel to **תרוממי מפלמי** of Psalms. The sense may be: 'Who bringeth me forth and freeth me from the power of mine enemies', the allusion being to his liberation from the power of Saul, and from his vassalage to the Philistines.

I append the full text of the Hymn, arranged and corrected in accordance with the conclusions of our foregoing inquiry.

I

סלעי ומצדתי [ומפלמי לי]	יהוה
צורי אחסהרבו	אלהי
וקרן-ישעי ומישגבי [ומנוסי משעי מחמוס תשעני].	מגני
אקרא יהוה	מהלל
אישע.	ומן איבי

II

משברי מות	I. אפפני
יבעתני.	נחלי בליעל
סבני	חבלי שאול
מקשי מות.	קדמני
יהוה	בצר-לי אקרא
אשוע.	ואל אלהי
קולי	וישמע מהיכלו
באזניו.	ושועתי
הארץ	2. ותגעש ותרעש
ירגזו	מוסדות השמים
כי חרה-לו.	ויתגעשו
באפו	עלה עשן
מפיו תאכל	ואש
בערו ממנו.	נחלים
וירד	3. ויט שמים
תחת רגליו.	וערפל
ויעף	וירכב על-כרוב
על-כנפי רוח.	וידא
סביבתיו [סכות]	וישת חשך
עבי שחקים. [מים]	חשכת
נגדו	מננה
נחלי אש.	בערו
יהוה	4. וירעם מן-שמים
יתן קולו.	ועליון
ויפיצם	וישלח חצים
ויהמם.	ויברק ברק

אפקי ים	ויראו	
מוסדות תבל.	ויגלו	
יהוה	בגערת	
רוח אפו.	מנשמת	
יקחני	ישלח ממרום	5.
ממים רבים.	ימשיני	
כירעו	יצילני מאיבי	
כיראמצו ממני	משנאי	
ביום אירי	יקדמני	
משען-לי.	ויהי יהוה	
למרחב אתי	ויצא	
כירחפץ בי.	יחלצני	
כצדקתי	[יגמלני יהוה	I.
ישיב-לי.	כבר ידי	
דרכי יהוה	כירשמרתי	
מאלהי.	ולא רשעתי	
לנגדי	כירכל משפטו	
לא-אסור ממנה.	וחקתו	
תמים לו	ואהיה	
מעוני.	ואשתמרה	
כצדקתי	וישב יהוה-לי	
לנגד עיניו].	כברי	
תתחסד	[עם חסיד	2.
תתמם.	עם תמים	
תתברר	עם נבר	
תתפתל].	ועם עקש	
תושיע	[ואת-עם עני	3.
על-רמים תשפיל].	ועיניך	

III

- i. כִּי־אַתָּה נִרִי יְהוָה
וְאַלֹהֵי יִגְיָה חֲשָׁבִי.
כִּי־בִכָּה אֲרִוץ גָּדוֹד
בְּאַלֹהֵי אֲדֹלֵג שׁוֹר.
הָאֵל מְאֹזְרֵי חַיִל [הָאֵל תָּמִים דְּרָבֹן]
וַיִּתֵּן תָּמִים דְּרָבִי.
מִשׁוּה רִגְלִי כְּאִלּוֹת
וְעַל בְּמוֹת יַעֲמִידֵנִי.
2. מְלֻמֵּד יָדֵי לְמַלְחָמָה [וְתַתֵּן־לִי מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֶךָ
וְנַחְתָּה קֶשֶׁת זֶרַעְתִּי. [נְחוּשָׁה] וְעִנּוּתְךָ תִּרְבֵּנִי].
[אִמְרַת יְהוָה צְרוּפָה
תִּרְחִיב צַעֲדֵי תַחְתָּנִי מִגֵּן־הוּא לְכָל הַחֲסִידִיבֹן].
וְלֹא מַעֲרֹד קֶרְסְלִי.
אֲרַדְפָּה אִיבִי וְאֲשִׁיגֵם
וְלֹא אֲשׁוּב עַד־כְּלוֹתָם.
אֲמַחֲצֵם וְלֹא יִקְוֹמוּן [וְאִכְלָם ר־]
יִפְּלוּ תַחַת רִגְלִי.
3. וְתֹאזְרֵנִי חַיִל לְמַלְחָמָה
תִּכְרִיעַ קִמִּי תַחְתָּנִי.
וְאִיבִי נִתְּתֵה־לִי עֶרְף
מִשְׁנָאִי וְאַצְמִיתָם.
יִשְׁוּעוֹ וְאִי־יְהוָה וְאִין מִשְׁיַע
וְלֹא עֲנָם.
וְאַשְׁחַקֵם כַּעֲפֵר אֲרִץ
כְּטִיט חוּצוֹת אֲדַקֵּם [אֲרַקֵּעֵם].

מריבי עמי	תפֿלמני	4.
תצילני.	מאיש חמסים	
לראש נזים	תשימני	
יעברני.	עם לא־ידעתי	
יתכחשרלי	בני נכר	
ישמעורלי.	לשמע און	
יבלו	בני נכר	
ממסגרותיהם.	וירגזו	
וברוך צורי	חיי־הוה	5.
אלהי ישעי [צור]	וירם	
כי־בלעדי יהוה		
ומי־צור זולתי אלהינו].		
נקמת־לי	האל הנתן	
תחתני.	ומריד עמים	
מן איבי	ומציאי	
תרוממני.	ומן קמי	
[על־כן אורך יהוה בנזים		
ולשמך אזמר].		
מלכו	מגדיל ישועות	
למשיחו	ועשה חסד	
עד־עולם.	לדוד ולזרעו	

3. THE ORACLE OF DAVID

The critics have almost unanimously declared against the genuineness of this poem. David, they maintain, could not possibly have described himself as נעים ומרות ישראל. For this would imply either that David was already in his lifetime famous as a hymn writer, following the interpretation of Rashi and other Jewish commentators, or, following the less probable interpretation of the moderns, that already

in his lifetime he had become the favourite object of Israel's poems. Such a description, if genuine, would clash with the critical theory of the late date of the Psalms, and similar compositions preserved to us in the Bible. Secondly, David was not possessed with the gift of prophecy, as stated in vv. 2, 3. Thirdly, ver. 7 b contains the eschatological doctrine of the punishment of the wicked with fire, a doctrine which belongs, according to the critics, to the later stage of religious development. None of these arguments, however, will stand a moment's examination. The first two simply beg the question. And even if we accept the critical dogma that all the Psalmic poetry preserved in the Bible is of exilic and post-exilic date, we are yet by no means compelled to believe that no Psalmic poetry was written in David's time. For such poetry might have failed to secure preservation in the Biblical collection. But the critics themselves concede the genuineness of David's elegies on Saul and Jonathan, and on Abner. Why could not David have composed also religious poetry? He was endowed with a sensitive soul and with a rich imagination. He was also deeply religious, as is proved, to cite no other examples, by his speech to Zadok (2 Sam. 15. 25-6), and by his answer to Abishai (*ibid.* 16. 10-12). And his romantic and adventurous career offered rich material and plenty of opportunities for the composition of hymns of prayer in times of danger, and of praise in hours of escape. It would have been passing strange if David had not used his poetical and musical gifts in the service of his God. Again, why should not other poets have sung of David and his noble deeds, even in his own lifetime? Already at the beginning of his wonderful career, and in the ruder age of Saul's reign, he had become the inspiration of the popular poet and

musician of the time (1 Sam. 18. 7, &c.). It would have been very strange indeed, if no poet had been found in the greater and more prosperous age of his own reign to sing of the heroic king and his heroic achievements. Nor have we any right to deny David the gift of prophetic inspiration. The anointment had conferred such a gift upon Saul (1 Sam. 10. 6, &c.); why not also upon David? (Cf. 1 Sam. 16. 13, and note the comparison of David to an Angel of God, 2 Sam. 14. 17, 20; 19. 28.) The third argument rests upon a very doubtful interpretation of ver. 7, and need not be considered any further. Apart from these shaky arguments, and the subjective prepossessions of the critics, there is no evidence whatever to disprove the genuineness of the tradition of the Davidic authorship of our poem. Not a single Aramaism is to be found in it; nor any trace, however faint, of allusions to conditions or events later than the Davidic age. Furthermore, the Davidic authorship is not only asserted in the superscription, but it is actually made the subject of three verses out of the seven composing the poem. We must, therefore, regard its Davidic authorship as beyond doubt or question.

The poem consists of two parts: an Exordium (vv. 1-3), and the Oracle (vv. 4-7). The Exordium begins with a trimetric tetrastich, describing the poet (ver. 1), and then proceeds to describe the source of the oracle, viz. God's word communicated direct to the poet. In ver. 3a we must read with the Old Latin Version אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, as in ver. 1. But the line as it stands is incomplete, for אָמַר requires a dative. I therefore propose to transfer לִי to the beginning of the line, and to insert בִּי before דִּבֶּר. We may suppose it to have been omitted accidentally from the original text

through haplography : יעקב ב (=בי) . The distich will then run as follows :

אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב	לִי אָמַר
צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל,	בִּי דַבֵּר

The next distich has given great trouble to commentators. Our mediaeval exegetes connect it with the foregoing : cf. Rashi : צָרִיק . . . מוֹשֵׁל שְׂאֵחֵיהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁאֵחֵיהּ מוֹשֵׁל . . . צָרִיק, but the connexion is not apparent. Most moderns (cf. Driver's note *ad loc.*) connect it with what follows as subject to ver. 4, but this connexion is on grammatical grounds very precarious. I believe it is evident that the distich is parallel to ver. 1, and may, therefore, probably be a gloss on that verse. The original exordium will thus have consisted of two tetrastichs of synonymous lines, each line containing three stresses, with a *caesura* after the first or second stress.

The text of the second part, the Oracle, is extremely difficult. In the second half of ver. 4 we get the prepositional letter ם repeated three times in four words. So also the combination כִּי לֹא is repeated three times in vv. 5, 6. Note also the repetition of כִּי alone in ver. 5. All this cannot be original. Then again, ver. 4 lacks a predicate, and its second half (מִנְנָה וְנִי) lacks a verb. The latter circumstance has induced the moderns to turn מִנְנָה into some verbal form, such as מְצַמִּיחַ, מְנִיחַ, &c. (cf. Driver). But these emendations are excluded by the fact that נִנָּה is evidently parallel to אִוֵּר בִּקֵּר in the first half of the verse. Again, כִּי לֹא כֵן in ver. 5 a is interpreted as an interrogative, or is emended into הֲלֹא. But we expect that the idea expressed in this line, which forms the chief burden of the Oracle, should be made the subject of a *categorical* statement, and not of a mere interrogative. I therefore propose to emend כִּנְנָה, and to transfer to it the *warw* from וּבְאוֹר;

further, to delete the \bar{m} from מארץ as a dittography from ממטר, and to read ירשא = ירשא for רשא, cf. Gen. i. 11, and Joel 2. 22; and finally, to delete כי לא at the beginning of ver. 5 as a dittography from the following, and to join the remaining words of ver. 5a to ver. 4 as its predicate. The lines will thus run as follows:

יורה שמש	באור בקר
לא עבות	בקר
ירשא ארץ	וכננה ממטר
עם-אל.	בן ביתי

‘ As the light of morning	when the sun ariseth,
A morning	without clouds,
As the brightness after rain	which causeth the earth to
	spring forth with young
	grass,
So shall my house	be with God.’

We thus obtain a tetrastich similar to those in the Exordium, except that lines *a* and *c*, which are parallel synonymously, contain four stresses, instead of three, as in the Exordium and in the rest of the poem. Line *b* is climactic to *a*, and line *d* is synthetic to the three preceding lines. The tetrastich thus states positively the chief purpose of the Oracle, viz. the promise of the brightest prosperity to the dynasty of the inspired Royal singer.

The next line gives the cause of this prosperity: the poet’s covenant with God, the document of which is set out in detail, and securely preserved. Then follows the reason why God granted the poet His covenant, viz. the poet’s opposition to evil-doers. הפץ must be read, with all

moderns, חפצי=חפץ, and ובליעל must be joined to יצמיח, and read יצמיחו בליעל. The lines will thus run:

כִּי־כָל יִשְׁעִי וְכָל־חַפְצִי
כִּי־לֹא יִצְמִיחוּ בְּלִיעֵל.

We thus obtain another trimetric tetrastich, similar to the preceding tetrastichs.

The following lines describe the character of the בליעל, who are compared to thorns which cannot be touched by the human hand, except with instruments of iron. I propose to read כִּי קִיץ = קִי קִיץ for כִּקִּיץ מִנֶּר. כִּקִּיץ should, perhaps, be emended, with many moderns, into מִדְּבַר, but the whole of this passage is extremely doubtful. If genuine, it must be regarded as fragmentary; for it is not likely that the poem should have concluded here. בַּשָּׁבַת has been rightly recognized by all moderns as a dittography of the corrupt ישב בשבח in ver. 8. But I conjecture that the whole of this very prosaic line is a gloss. vv. 6, 7 will thus form another tetrastich, similar in character to the preceding, except that the last line has four stresses, as ver. 4 a, c.

I now append the full text of the poem, arranged and emended according to the results of our investigation:

I

[מושל באדם צדיק]	בְּיִשְׁעִי	1. נָאֵם דָּוִד
[בִּירַאת אֱלֹהִים.]	מוֹשֵׁל	וְנָאֵם הַגִּבּוֹר
	אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב	מִשִּׁיחַ
	זִמְרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל.	וְנִעִיִם
	דְּבַר־בִּי	2. רוּחַ יְהוָה
	עַל לְשׁוֹנִי.	וּמַלְתּוֹ
	אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב	לִי־אָמַר
	צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל.	בִּירְדֵּבֶר

II

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----|
| יורח שמש | כאור בקר | 1. |
| לא עבות | בקר | |
| יִדְשָׂא ארץ | וכננה ממטר | |
| עם־אל. | בן ביתי | |
| שם־לי | כי־ברית עולם | 2. |
| ושמרה | ערובה בכל | |
| וכל־חפצי | כי־כל ישעי | |
| בליעל. | כי־לא יצמיחו | |
| בלהם | כִּי־קִיץ מנד (?) | 3. |
| יקחו. | בי־לא ביד | |
| בהם | ואיש יגע | |
| [ובאש שרוף ישרפו.] | ימלא ברזל | |
| | ועין חנית. | |